

AMERICA
AND OTHER
POEMS





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A M E R I C A
AND OTHER POEMS

A M E R I C A

A N D O T H E R P O E M S

BY

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NEW YORK—JOHN LANE COMPANY
LONDON—JOHN LANE—THE BODLEY HEAD
TORONTO — BELL & COCKBURN — MCMXIV

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OCT 15 1914

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TO
CONINGSBY DAWSON
THE FATHER TO THE SON

*We each have found the lost Hesperides,
And homeward brought bright fruitage;
thine
Touched with the magic bloom of morning
seas,
With the cool light of evening—mine.*

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A M E R I C A
AND OTHER POEMS

AMERICA:

I

WHERE the many-windowed towers dare the
sky

And the wizard bridges span the busy sea,
Where the many-mated shuttles of the ships
Weave the Past into the web of Things to Be;

Where the high-suspended cars
Braid the night with ropes of stars,
And the earth is grooved with arteries of fire;
There the City breathes its passion and desire,
And I see it stand supreme,
Fantastic as a dream.

Will it falter? Will it fail? Will it endure?
Nay: it standeth very sure.

II

Thousand-domed the cities line the water-
ways,

Thousand-leagued the coast-wise sands and
forests spread,

And city calls to city through the dawns,

“Behold the wastes we have inherited!

In the ancient dwelling-place

Of a long-forgotten race,

We deck ourselves with marble and with gold,

We plant our feet of steel, our flag of stars
unfold,

And uplift our strident song

Of Triumph to the Strong!”

Will they falter? Will they fail? Will they
endure?

Nay: all standeth very sure.

III

Where the lonely huntsman fronts the northern lights,

Where the mountains hang like clouds against the sky,

Where the yellow flame of wheatfields, mile on mile,

Quivers as the steel-linked cars go rushing by:

Where the palm-fringed smooth lagoon
Sucks down the Southern moon,

Where the white-walled houses flash like sails
at sea

Upon the gray-green prairie's vacancy,

Still I hear the song
Of Triumph to the Strong.

Will it falter? Will it cease? Will it endure?

Nay: its note is very sure.

IV

From the Volga and the Tiber and the Seas,
From the lands of long misrule thy children
come,

And thou standest like a Shepherd by the fold
And numberest thy sheep as they draw home.

From the ways of dearth and toil,
From the hard penurious soil,
Like school-freed children glad they seek thy
knees,

And find wise liberty in thy decrees.

No more disconsolate,
They grasp a larger fate;
Shall they falter? Shall they find thy free-
dom sure?
Yea: in truth they shall endure.

V

From the sunset-lands they come, and from
the East,

From the Tagus, and the Danube, and the
Rhine,

From the waters ploughed by Norsemen in
their pride,

From the fiord and the factory, and the mine:

Behold a miracle!

Within thy crucible

The cosmic flame that challenges the sun

Transfuses million-varied lives to one!

O nation, young and gay,

Nation born within a day,

Shall it falter! Shall it cease? Shall it en-
dure?

Yea: it standeth very sure.

VI

Where the workshop flings its plumes athwart

the sky,

Where the labouring engines groan as if in

pain,

Where the low tree-cradled cottage dots the

hill,

Where the lonely ranchman rides along the

plain;

Where the Mississippi flows,

Where Shasta lifts her snows,

Day by day thy far-flung children praise thy

name,

Forgetful they of days of ancient shame,

Of Emperors and Czars,

Beneath thy flag of stars.

Shall they falter? Shall they cease? Shall
they endure?

Yea: their faith is very sure.

VII

For a bitter night and day they shall be tried,
They shall moan within the cruel hand of
greed;

But ever when the wrong has wrought its
worst

Shall arise Redeemers answering to their
need.

From some backwood Bethlehem

Their Christ shall come to them;

Thro' the roaring hells of Mammon, by the
path

Of mocking Calvaries, he shall pass on in his
wrath,

Till his hands have hewn the way
To the daylight and the Day.

Shall he falter in the strife? Shall he en-
dure?

Nay: his step is very sure.

VIII

Where the school-house banner flaunts the
morning breeze,

Where the rough farm student strides amid
the wheat,

Where the voice of knowledge fills a thousand
halls,

Where the athletes in their mimic warfare
meet;

Where the master grasps the brand
Of lightning in his hand,
And the hidden Powers of Air to service bent
Proclaim the issue of the long experiment,
I behold the future race
Arise in strength and grace;
Shall they falter? Shall they fail? Shall they
endure?
Lo, the onward march is sure.

IX

With the tempered pride of chastened confi-
dence,
Level-browed and eager-eyed the race shall be,
And their lips shall learn the frugal speech of
power,
And the braggart boast shall perish utterly.

False gods of gold and lust
Shall crumble into dust;
Till, last of all, the nation's King shall come,
And on each high-piled capitol and dome,
Wherein Right hath suffered loss,
Not the Eagle, but the Cross
Shall greet obedient peoples and endure—
Yea: this end is very sure.

EXTRFME UNCTION

(AVIGNON)

PART I

So ends the long confession; so

Begins the last most mystic rite.

God's lily of Dawn begins to grow

Out of the stagnant pools of Night.

The poplars shiver underneath

The pallid stars; the hooded hills

Stand still, like monks, and hold their breath

To see the travail God fulfils.

Would any think to see her thus,
Her face made bright with God's live flame,
She hid so many sins from us,
Or trod such secret ways of shame?
She lies, palm folded meek on palm,
She smiles as they who visions see;
No dying saint drank deeper calm,
Nor God's own Mother verily.

So have I seen a flower shoot
Up golden-hearted, angel-wise,
Nor shall one guess what at the root
Of hidden putrefaction lies:
Nor shall one ask, nor shall one know
Thro' what dim depths its fibres range;
Brother, God willed it even so,
And God's world—it is very strange!

First with God's holy oil I touch
The eyelids dropped above the eyes
Which loved the world's pomps overmuch,
Whose vision night and day likewise
Was wholly of love's hid delight,
Nor knew the wonder of God's grace;
May peace fall on them, nor affright
Be theirs when they behold God's face.

Within them may each picture fade
Of old delights, despairs, desires,
As fade the faces fancy made
In childhood's long-extinguished fires.
My daughter, lift thine eyes and see
The Holy Rood, the Thorn-crowned Man,
—Forgotten long,—Who died for thee,
And loved thee since the world began.

Likewise I shrive each gate of sense,
 Each delicate nostril, tender ear;
Gone are thy lovers, gone, Ah whence,
 Sighs flower-sweet, vows heaven-dear?
Gone is thy dream, and unfulfilled!
 Gone those for whom thy soul did wait!
O sense that sinned, O sense that thrilled,
 Behold thy house left desolate!

Is it not written, even thus
 Daughters of music they shall cease?
Watchers at windows, who for us
 Made signs of trouble or of peace,
These, when is broke the golden bowl
 Shall vanish in the evening gleam;
O dream of Life, O Living Soul,
 Thyself a Dream within a Dream!

Next on thy lips my sign I make,
Full crimson lips they always were
That smiled a little when they spake,
(Dear God, how sweet the face of her!)
Porches of laughter, doors of pain
Wherfrom Love turns in fear and flies,
Crying, "The clouds pursue the rain,
What pleasure have I now in these?"

Doors that are shut forevermore,
For mourners go about the street;
Red lips that blossomed kisses bore
In far-off days when Love was sweet;
Red flowers that fall at last to dust,
Trodden beneath the feet of men,
Lo, He is near, Who blessed the trust
And took the kiss of Magdalen!

Open thy hands, I touch these too
Which took so fast a hold on sin,
All soft-felt touches loved, and knew
How the blood leapt and burned therein;
Frail hands that pluck the counterpane,
That idly flutter to and fro,
Lo, Christ stoops low—ye may attain
To touch His garment ere He go!

Next on each foot so swift to run
In ways where heavy odours weighed
Upon the soul, and God's own sun
Pierced faintly thro' the poisonous shade;
He, whose tired feet were washed with tears,
Now washes thine with oils of grace,
That thine may climb beyond the spheres
And find the path that finds His face.

And last upon thy heart, which is
As a tense string, on which Death makes
Such music of wild woe and bliss
It vibrates, and vibrating breaks!
Upon thy heart, which knew desire,
Its little gain, its bitter loss,
Its cruel insatiable fire,
I lay for sign of peace His Cross.

So all is done. My daughter, now
Look up and see thy place prepared.
See how the streets of heaven glow,
The fruit of Life with angels shared!
Apostles, martyrs, saints of grace,
Each bends toward you a shining head;
Be of good cheer!—Ah, Christ! her face
Grows gray, her hands fall—she is dead!

PART II

The cold rain falls upon her grave,
The dark night creeps along the eave,
Outside she lies where grasses wave
And boughs make moan, and tired winds
grieve.

Outside beneath the river-mist,
In that grim bed of doleful rest,
The mouth of rose I never kiss't,
The slender hands I never press't.

Peace, peace, O heart that loved her too,
O heart that broke discerning how
Too near, too far, too dear she grew
Long years ago—O wake not thou!

Peace, peace, O heart! Is it not writ
That not a sparrow falls, but He
Who gave it wings remembers it?
Pity of God, remember me!

The things that were, the things that are

I weigh and ponder, knowing well

My sin than hers was greater far

For love in me was mutable.

God pardon me this sweet excess

Of late-wise folly that I feel

Sin cannot make me love her less,

Nor virtue bid me lowlier kneel.

I love, but not the love that used

Within this heart of flesh to beat

Can stir me now; the cord is loosed,

Sunk is the fire and spent the heat.

And thou art as the angels, they

Who marry not—Christ sayeth so—

O dear dead woman teach me the way

Of this new love that dead folks know!

Draw near, when day begins to chase
Night weeping from the darkened eave;
Draw near, thou vision of a Face,
With eyes that smile and cannot grieve.

Draw near, in faint-spun amethyst
Of Dawn, half-hidden, half-confess't,
O mouth of rose I never kiss't,
O slender hands I never press't!

The half-light grows upon the hill,
Beneath the hill the waters glide;
The air is very sweet and still,
And all the Doors of God stand wide.
Steal forth and meet me, if you may;
Stoop low, O mouth of rose, stoop low;
O dear, dead Woman, teach me the way
Of this new love that dead folk know.

THE KISS

(1794)

THE place is Paris ; the scene, the time,
When the Terror spawned her bloody brood.

On a certain morning, gray with rime,
A woman before her judges stood ;
Proud and straight, with golden hair
Like a crown of glory, she stood there.

Friend was she of a martyred queen ;
Robespierre glared on her and said,
“Here’s dainty food for the guillotine,
Gold looks best when it’s mixed with red.

Gold-red blood, and blood-gold hair,
God, but He made this woman fair !

“A shade too pale in the lip maybe,
And the scornful mouth of the aristocrat!
God’s work’s good, but you shall see
Robespierre can improve on that!
Wait till you watch *my* flesh-tints grow—
Roses of blood on cheek and brow!”

But just as the tumbril at the door
Rattled and stopt, out flasht a sword;
A man’s voice clamoured above the roar
Of Robespierre’s court, and craved a word;
And Robespierre, scenting some novel freak
In the daily drama, bade him speak.

The court grew still as a windless sea;
With voice a-tremble the man commenced;

“Citizen-friends, you all know me,
Wounds I have borne unrecompensed,
Something have suffered in my task,
Nothing have asked, but now I ask.

“A soldier-citizen, here stand I
Claiming this woman’s life—be just!
This my price for a pain gone by,
Wound of bullet and bayonet-thrust;
Also, to make the pact complete,
My life for hers—’tis right and meet.

“ ‘Love,’ you will say, ‘France knows it not,
Duty, not love, for hours like this!’
’Tis well, for she loves me not a jot,
Owes me no love, hath given no kiss;

These many years I love, but she
Knows not love, and loves not me.

“Sirs, this woman has been to me
France herself incarnated!
Citizens, look, and you shall see
France herself in that golden head,
France in that curling lip, and France
In the fire and charm of that proud glance.

“Loved in triumph, adored in shame,
Poet, prophetess, priestess Thou,
Guarding the deathless altar-flame,
Wearing the thorn-crown on thy brow,
Mocking the mockers who made thy pain,
Dying, ever to rise again:

“France, with the deep dream-weighted eyes,
France, with the calm brows fronting fate,
Beautiful, passionate, foolish, wise,
Here thou standest incarnate,
Thou and this woman one,—and I
Dying for her who must not die!”

The man’s voice ceased, and a hum went round
The crowded court. Then Robespierre
Lifted his cruel eyes from the ground
And glanced round furtively, half-aware
And half-resolved how the tide would flow;
Then took it, and said, “She’s free—may go!”

Until that moment the woman had stood
Immobile, scornful, marble-cold.

Now, with a hot, quick rush of blood
Life came back and the current rolled
Delicious thro' every vein; she seemed
The rose-red goddess poets have dreamed.

Glowed and melted her countenance,
Her eyes fulfilled with happy tears;
Slowly she spake, as in a trance,
“He saith he hath loved me many years,
No kiss he hath ever won, he saith,
Yet he hath loved me unto death!”

Sideways she bent, moved forth a pace,
Then, sudden she cross't the clamorous room,
Her eyes leapt out in one long embrace
On his, and brought him love and doom,

She stooped her glorious golden head
And kissed the man—and he fell dead.

Which would you choose if you might choose,

The fate of woman or the man?

Give me the man's life, tho' it lose

Joy in the moment it began;

Give me the death that is quick and sweet

In the hour when life appears complete.

For him, and for me too, I will trust,

No watching the light fade gleam by gleam;

No time for the fair to fall in dust,

For evil to cloud and spoil the dream:

And never to know that pain of pain

To have wearied of dreams and found them

vain.

I envy the man, for in that hour he

Knew his impossible hope was true.

He lost the world for a kiss, but she

Lost him; and, as each fades out of view,

I see him wrapt in a blaze of bliss,

She—kissing dead lips that cannot kiss.

THE DREAM OF KINGS

DEAD Kings in the dust are hid
Pharaoh in his Pyramid,
Caesar sleeps no man knows where,
Alexander's tomb is bare,
Bonaparte lies robed in lead,
All the foes he fought are dead,
Of their conquests all they keep
Is a place wherein to sleep.

Gone the purple insolence
Of their brief omnipotence ;
Gone the legions that they hurled
Half across a flaming world ;

All the trumpets shouting war
Penetrate not where they are;
Glory's torch that led them on,
Pride that mocked oblivion,
All are darkened, all are gone.

Humbler now the dreams they have,
Each within his mighty grave;
Caesar, wheresoe'er he lies
Dreams of Cleopatra's eyes;
Alexander craves the grace
Of Roxana's tender face;
Bonaparte with passion keen
Turns again to Josephine;
Each toward the other yearns,
Glory gone, lo, Love returns.

Dead Kings in the dust are hid,
Yet within the Pyramid,
Monument of Glory's lust,
Hands of dust seek hands of dust;
Quite forgotten crown and state;
Pomp of power, fear of fate;
Still remains one subtler bliss,
Sweetness of some woman's kiss,
All that life has left them—this!

FROM THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE

O, WHEN will ye let us go?
We have toiled and are not fed,
Scant our wages, sour our bread;
Parched and smitten of the sun
Ours is labour never done.
Bricks we fashion without straw,
Blows we suffer without law,
We are minished and brought low,
O when will ye let us go?

Ah, how sad the years and slow!
What is this that ye have said,
“Depart ye when your debt is paid?”

Wherewithal have we to pay?

Ye have taken the light of day,
Taken hope, and strength, and life,
Taken children, home and wife;
Is there any further woe?

O when will ye let us go?

Up, and down, and to and fro
We see long processions move;
Maidens garlanded with love,
Youths who know the joy of youth,
Priests who talk of right and truth!
Not for us the lover's bliss,
Lips that whisper, mouths that kiss,
Nor the mind that seeks to know—
O when will ye let us go?

Once, but very long ago,
So we heard our fathers say,
They rose up at dawn of day,
Saw the sun, a shining disc,
Gild the feathered tamarisk,
Rode forth free and sang their psalm
By the river-rooted palm;
No such joy their children know—
O when will ye let us go?

Song is for the free, we trow,
Worship for the heart at ease,
Prayer for those who dwell in peace,
God for those who have not trod
Thro' the Hell that knows not God!
We, in strange lands wandering,
Songs of Zion cannot sing,

This the only song we know—

O when will ye let us go?

Near the waters, where they flow,

We have seen the refuse-heap,

Refuse no man cares to keep!

Chard and fragment, there they lie

Quiet in their infamy!

Chard and fragment, such are we,

Quiet all we yearn to be;

Cast us forth, and even so

Let us go, O let us go!

Now there falls the evening glow,

Now the solemn temple's built,

Porch of stone and roof of gilt.

Enter in, O eager throng,

Flame-faced priest and child of song!

As for us, we have not sought
Entrance to the house we wrought;
Humbler coveting we know—
Only this, O let us go!

Now there dies the mason's blow,
Lingering on the sunset air;
Now is built, proportioned fair,
All the marriage-house we raised.
Lo, we ask not to be praised;
Enter ye, and fragrant lie
On your beds of ivory;
We, too dulled by work and woe,
Only cry, O let us go!

Now there passes, moving slow,
Torch-lit to the Pyramid,
He from whom all things are hid.

Lo, the corpse by love home-lit,

We behold and envy it!

Lo, the dead, the Thing he is,

We would fain be even this!

Mighty death, thou art no foe,

Thou last Friend, O let us go!

God hath brought us very low,

Minished and brought low are we,

Things of naught and shame we be!

Bricks we fashion without straw,

Blows we suffer without law;

Hear us, God, whom none will heed,

Out of Hell we fruitless plead;

Thou, Who knowest things are so,

Strike Thine hour, and let us go.

PEACE

PEACE?

Not till the wrath of the sea is ended and past;

And folded the wings of the thunder that
troubled the world!

Not till the final bolt of the Lightning is
flash't

Shall the winds be at rest, and the banners
of Tempest be furled!

Then when the havoc is done,
Shall rise the innocent Sun,

And the Sea and the Dead shall have peace!

Peace?

Not till the corn is laid low and the land is
aflame

And the red wine of War is drunk to its
bitterest drop;
Not till the bruised breasts of Freedom are
healed of their shame,
Not till the city is void shall the Plague-
Angel stop!
Then, when the Martyrdom's done,
Shall rise the ignorant Sun,
And the Land and the Dead shall have peace!

Peace?
Not while the arrow that flies at noonday is
feared,
Not while the pestilence poisons and darkens
the night;
Not while the innocent flesh with anguish is
seared,

Not while at eventide weary ones cry for
the light!

Then, when the Torture is done,
Shall rise the insolent Sun,
And the Dead and the Living have peace!

THE LAST RIDE OF THE SHEIK ABDULLAH

INTO the desert, into the desert
All alone I ride!

At last the clamour of tongues is still,
The fever of living, the strife of will,
The doors of the old sick life flung wide
Let me out, and thus I ride.

The City smokes like a fire of leaves
Fallen and burned its laurelled pride;
Grief runs moaning under its eaves;
But over my head God's whiteness glides,
Under my feet the wide world slides,
It is earth that runs back like a tide,

And heaven comes rushing up as I ride,
As into the desert I ride.

Still, as never was city or sea,
Empty of man or house or tree,
The desert lies round me as I ride;
The blue sky shuts down everywhere
Close on the earth, the quivering air
Parts like a flame that winds divide,
And closes behind me as I ride.

Ah, Joy of Freedom! Let me ride
Far from the world I have denied,
Forever and ever on, still on,
Till all the stars that flickered and shone
Have fallen behind me, one by one,
Till I touch the blue steep wall of air,
And suddenly draw rein at God's stair,

Coming on Heaven unaware,

As over the desert I ride.

Caged and tamed for many a day,

In the world's market hot and gray,

I have danced, a puppet, to pipes that play

A mirthful tune that mirth belied;

A wilder music now salutes

My soul, and runs around life's roots,

Like silver rain that melts the sod.

Hark! how the sands around me hum,

And all the stretched sky, like a drum,

Throbs at the finger-touch of God,

As into the desert I ride.

I will ride right on to God's feet,

For my heart is strong, my camel fleet;

I will ride on and never stop
Till at His palace stair I drop,
When Azrael standeth wonder-eyed,
In one last venture quenching thirst
For freedom lost in the years accurst
Which barren as sand behind me lie;
On to the rim of the utmost sky
I ride as I die, I die and ride!

The earth slides under me like a tide,
My life runs out of me as I ride,
I ride right into Eternity;
Azrael stoops to let me by,
Like a torn curtain hangs the sky,
Heaven upon its other side!
And so I ride,
I die as I ride, I ride and die.

SALOME

(*Singing*)

*Grasp the world, O hands of mine,
Little hands that hold the world—
Press it, till it flows in wine,
Fling it from thee, like the curled
Grape-skin, when its use is done—
See the magic goblet shine,
Red with blood and bright with sun—
So I drink—the draught is mine!*

(*Speaking*)

Not that I care so much, but who could tell
The issue, like a hungry lightning glare

Flasht from clear heavens? I never danced
so well,

That said he, said they all. I feel my hair
Stir still with magic motions, perfumed
wind

Lashed into eddies, beating on the bare
Smooth limbs and breast; and then I throw
behind,

Over my shoulder, so, a sudden glance,
And catch their faces smitten by its light
Into a hungrier circle. Then I smile,
And suddenly all the spirit of the dance
Consumes me, rends me, blots and blurs my
sight

With a fiery wind, their great eyes all the
while

Burning yet closer, eating into my heart.

Who cares what comes? There's nothing
good nor vile.

The world whirls round, I'm lifted like a
part

Of a giant whole; a spirit's in my feet,
He rends my raiment, shakes my black hair
down,

Smites my lips into song, so shrill and sweet
It frightens me. Ah, that's my own, my
own!

Limbs, hair, song, face, I know to-night
to be

Most beautiful. Look, my lords, there's a
foot

Worthy a throne at least! What's the
decree?

Half of his kingdom Herod gives to me?

I cannot tell; but all the great lamps
shoot

An angry light, and suddenly, like a tide,
The fire runs out of my heart, and still I
stand

As though I had never moved; and there's
a hand

Laid on me, and Herodias, crafty-eyed,
Is buzzing at my ear.

(*Singing*)

*Good and ill, mere colors these,
Take of each as thou shalt please,
Purple grape or yellow—thine;
Each alike shall make life's wine,
See the magic goblet shine,
Drink thy fill, and take thy ease.*

(*Speaking*)

What's man after all? Is flesh so dear
That I should tremble? Yes, we feed on
men,

You and I, mother; that's a woman's part—
Glare on them, kiss them, draw them near,
and then

Leave their bones to the vulture. That's
the art

You've taught me, and I have not learned
amiss:

I'll snare a Caesar some day—there's a prey
Worthy the aim. I ever took as bliss
The sight of death. Heart of me! many a
day

How I have clapped my hands to see the
play,

When the stripped gladiators hewed and
hacked

And made the sand red. Once a man I saw
Just at my feet, torn by the lion's paw,
His shoulder bare to the bone, beseeching me
In a hoarse voice that was so shrill and
cracked

I laughed outright. 'Twas god-like sport
to see

The great beast leap, his angry mane like fire
Flashing about his ears, the downward
stroke

Of the great foot striking into the mire
The man like a mouse, with his back torn
and broke;

And I—I called for more—more lions,
more men :

That tawny beast who glares in yonder den,
Pit him against a score, the supplest score
Of slaves who ever trembled! Ah, the long
day,

Would it had lasted longer! Evermore
The same big pulse sending delicious thrills
Through the swell'n veins, when the eye
caught the ray
Of the sharp sword, and heard the lion
roar

Over his prey, like thunder in the hills.
And Herod, you remember, all the day
Sleepily watched, quick'ning a little bit
When the men died, till through the nar-
row slit
Of his heavy lids you saw there burned a
flame

Eager as mine, whose passion went and
came

Like a strong madness, till I longed to hurl
You, and your Herod, and all the people
down

Into the sand, and watch the bloody whirl—
I, on the topmost turret's slippery stone,
Standing triumphant in the wind, alone,
Watching you fight and die. There, do not
frown,

That's but a fancy. What was it you
said?

This man, this John the Baptist: well, I
own
I care not if he be alive or dead;
Let him rot slowly, or be slain, or choke;
But why should *I* strike the stroke?

I saw him once : dark like a thunder-rack
He lowered in the outer court, his eyes, jet
black,

Burned with a flame no other eyes e'er had ;
His voice like a trumpet, angry, somewhat
sad,

Calling, *Repent* : I wonder what he meant ?
There he stood garbed in skins, his shoul-
ders bent,

Black hair like mine, but grizzled and un-
kempt,

Looking around with something like con-
tempt

Or pity, with a fixed, clear, eager gaze,
As one who saw right through the sunlight's
blaze

Into the place beyond, where there are
hatched

The viper-lightnings: so he stood and
watched.

He moved me for a moment, made me
feel

A strange deep thrill, I never could think
why,

But you—you hate him with a hate so
real,

I would not wonder if that same deep eye
Spied something now: or if those same
thin lips

Loosed on you their sharp hail. I've heard
it said

If you say "*John*" to Herod, he bows his
head,

And his puffed face grows dark, as though
eclipse

Breathed in the presence of a hated name.

Well, let him die: I never liked to see
Men whose eyes smote you with that kind
of flame:

But why insist he die so secretly?

Now I would bring him in, call Tertius,
Make them both fight—there, in that marble
space;

Think of what jest the two would make
for us!

Only I must confess that solemn face
Might spoil the banquet with its angry eyes;
So why not save him for the lions? 'Twere
wise

To keep a man like that; be sure he'd fight
Beyond the best. 'Tis hardly worth the light
To kill him secretly; we shall not see
Whether he quail or frown. But let it be.
We want no thunder-clouds round Herod's
board;
Let them go quickly, bring the head ab-
horred,
And since you dare not bear it—*why, let me!*

(*Singing*)

Life and death meet in one cup,
Good and evil make the wine;
See the magic goblet shine,
Take the draught, and drink it up.

BLAKE'S HOMECOMING

There was sorrow on the sea,

All the way, all the way!

Home we came with fame, but he

Dying, dying all the way.

At Santa Cruz the squadron lay,

At dawn the whisper flew

“God be thanked we sail today!”

Voices sang and trumpets blew,

All the fleet was like a fair,

“Pulley haul, and heave, yo ho!

Ready here and steady there,
Let her go,
Head her northward thro' the bay!"

"Send the wind, O God be kind!"

Volleying from the south it came,
With the thunder packed behind,
So we sailed with seas aflame.

Fire-led, like the Israelite,
Cloud-defended, so we sailed;
Trumpets blowing day and night
Shrilled and hailed,
And God rode upon the wind.

"Waken," hear the seaman cry,
"Waken, Captain, England's near!"

Grayer grew the sea and sky,
Nor'west all the land rose clear.
Dim-eyed, worn with wounds and care,
On the heaving deck sat Blake,
“Tell me where is England, where?”
So he spake,
“Let me see her ere I die!”

Now the Lizard's past, and lo
All the Cornish hills rise red
In the Autumn's after-glow.
“Heaven,” was the one word he said.
“England and not Heaven,” we cried.
“ ’Tis the same,” he made reply.
Bonfires blazed out far and wide,
Lit the sky
All the way to Plymouth Hoe!

Fair the wind and swift the tide;
Ah, the English air is sweet!
People shouted, trumpets cried;
Then he rose upon his feet,
Strove to see, but he was blind,
Strove to walk, but force was spent,
Felt upon his face the wind,
Smiled content,
Tasting English air—and died!

Hush the trumpets! Cease the din!
Shores of England, be ye dumb!
He is gone, some port to win
Where your praises cannot come.
On the other side for him
Blow God's trumpets, clear and far,

See his soul pass, fading dim
Like a star!

Shores be still! He enters in.

There was glory on the sea,

All the way, all the way!

Home we came with fame, but he

Dying, dying all the way.

CADIZ BAY

You remember Cadiz Bay?

There the water shoals away,

Spouts and tumbles, green as grass,

Greener water never was.

Red and yellow spreads the land,

Pink and yellow spreads the sand;

Like a bubble on the swell

Rides the glittering citadel,

And beyond it, flower-bright,

Piled up windows take the light.

Sailing through the gates of day,

Thus I saw fair Cadiz town

With the blue hills looking down,
Cadiz town by Cadiz Bay.

Raleigh sailed into this Bay
Long since when the dawn was gray;
Fought till eve the Spanish dons,
Broke their high-built galleons,
“Now,” quoth he, “I think I hear
Old Sir Richard calling clear,
‘Here die I, at set of sun,
Joyous, for my duty’s done!’
Over Cadiz, like a flame,
Burns Sir Richard’s glorious name;
On the poop of Heaven he stands,
See him—lifting crimson hands!
Hear him—‘Thus I led the way;
Who for England dies today?’
Thus spake he in Cadiz Bay.”

Two long centuries pass away;

Sailing into Cadiz Bay

Comes another admiral,

Bravest he, where brave were all.

“Duty—let the word flame far,

“Starriest word, be thou our star!

“Burn aloft amid the gloom,

“Light us to the hero’s tomb;

“This day every man shall do

“His duty!” So, on that great day

The exultant signal flew

All the length of Cadiz Bay.

O my England, old and gray,

You’ll remember Cadiz Bay?

Here the voice of England spake,

Herc came Raleigh, Nelson, Blake,

Spake triumphant, glorious came,
With shouting crews and ships aflame,
Riding down the water-way,
Proud as on a marriage day!

You'll remember that great youth
When you fought for realm and truth;
And we, O curs't be we, and let
Our tongues be dumb if we forget!

Puissant still, by all defied,
England, for whom Nelson died,
Front thy fate! Arise and be
What thou wert, nor fear to play
Thy mighty part! The *Victory*
With thy pennon flying free,
Lords it still in Cadiz Bay!

THE FIRST-BORN

THE bitterest and the gladdest hour it was!
I stood at the stair's foot, and heard your cry
Pierce thro' the house. Upon the slanting glass
The setting sun made splendour, and I
watched

Him sink with eyes that nothing saw. Again
A moment's space the chamber-door unlatched
Let out your moanings, and I bitterly
Bowed down, and trembled at your voice of
pain.

Eternity seemed crowded in that hour;
All thought and passion, faculty and power,
Was quickened and intense: the veil of gross
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And faulty apprehension was withdrawn
And left the naked heaven of infinite things
Close to me, like a throbbing heart. More
close

I felt thy spirit, and I cried, "What now
If she be passing out on angel's wings?"
Just then the sun sank to his other dawn,
And, as his rim burned down in final glow,
I heard a new voice in the house, the cry
Of the new-born, whose kindling human light
Rose on our lives, and, please God, by-and-by,
Shall shine afar athwart the world's dim night,
When you and I in our dark rest shall lie.

DELIVERANCE

IN that sore hour around thy bed there stood
A silent guard of shadows, each equipped
With dart or arrow aimed against thy life;
Thy breath came slowly all that awful night!
Outside I heard the Wind and Earth at strife,
And on the window's ledge incessant dripped
The pitiless rain. At last I left thy room,
And, passing out, upon the threshold's edge
Whom should I meet but Death! A wan clear
light
Fell from his fathomless eyes; his brow was
gloom,
His rustling raiment seemed to sigh like sedge

When the salt marsh winds wail and beat
thereon.

He paused, he turned; and while I stood and
wept,

Behold a crimson signal waved and shone
On the door's lintel,—even such an one
As he obeyed in Egypt—and I knew
Death heard some higher summons and with-
drew.

When I returned, like a tired child you slept.

AT A GRECIAN ALTAR

PAL^E brow, no crown adorning,
Dim eyes that cannot see,
Face lifted up for scorning,
What empire calls for Thee?
What token dost Thou show me,
By what sign may I know Thee,
What homage do I owe Thee,
That Thou persuadest me?

Where wasting water floweth
To the unwasting sea,
When Aphrodite goeth
Foam-garlanded and free,

Where Tritons sport at leisure,
And all things move in measure
To a sonorous pleasure,
O who shall turn to Thee?

Where shining towers of laurel
Guard all the flower-fresh lea,
And, pale with amorous quarrel,
Or, flushed with ecstasy,
Daphne flies from Apollo,
By woodland height and hollow
And racing Cupids follow,
What place is this for Thee?

Yet, when the laurel burneth,
And grief comes suddenly,
When joy no more returneth,
Nor song to the gray sea;

When shadows come and thicken,
And hope itself doth sicken,
And hearts no longer quicken
To flutes of Arcady:

When men flee as a shadow
That fades and shall not be;
When mist lies on the meadow
And pain moans in the sea;
When love grows tired of giving,
And mortal wills of striving,
And life itself of living,
Then Thou persuadest me!

Yet fair was man and woman,
By that Leucadian sea,
Then gods themselves were human
With cheerful gaiety;

Heedless of past or morrow,
They knew not how to borrow
From hours of sin long sorrow
As Thou of Galilee.

Earth mixed itself with heaven,
Man spake with deity,
Nor felt thro' sombre even
The weight of things to be;
Day brought no hours of weeping,
Nor toil, nor fruitless reaping,
And night brought quiet sleeping
Of fulfilled infancy.

And so man lived contented
Dream-rich and vision-free,
Had naught that he repented,
Was naught he would not be;

Made gods of his own nature,
Grew to his perfect stature,
A half-divine glad creature
Of sun and wood and sea;

Till, undesired, Thou camest
Pale god of agony;
With sudden words Thou flamest
Upon the crimson sea,
And on the dawn came wailing,
And clouds of darkness sailing,
And wrath, and bitter railing,
And broken melody.

The woods that knew the waters
Where Naiades moved free,
The hills that knew the daughters
Of Bacchanalian glee,

The dales and groves, dew-gleaming,
That saw the gracious seeming
Of fair Endymion's dreaming,
Grew sad because of Thee!

With slow maimed feet Thou leadest
Thy grief-worn company,
With hollow voice Thou pleadest
That man should follow Thee.

What token dost Thou show me,
By what sign may I know Thee,
What homage do I owe Thee,
That Thou persuadest me?

Yet when to me, not prayerless,
The gods indifferent be;
When love itself, grown careless,
Proves its inconstancy;

I hear Thy step behind me,
I would some god might find me,
Aye, Lord, subdue and bind me,
And love me utterly.

The vain gods pass; they care not
For human misery.

They kill, they smite, they spare not,
All cruel and cold they be.

Their brows are clothed with thunder,
Their feet are shod thereunder
With flame that burns asunder
Clasped hands they do not see.

With grief they will not tarry,
Nor do they care that we
Such bitter burdens carry
Thro' days that bitter be.

They mock with mirth our mourning,
They smite us without warning.
Their mouths are filled with scorning,
Their hearts with enmity.

But Thou, more gently fashioned,
Hast conquered agony;
Thou stand'st serene, impassioned,
Lord of calamity!

Thine eyes, all grief confessing,
Are full of quiet blessing;
Thy wounds, on my wounds pressing,
Change pain to ecstasy.

When Joy flies as a shadow
That fades and shall not be;
When mist lies in the meadow
And grief moans on the sea;

Then, by the peace Thou sharest,
By that dim crown Thou wearest,
By that red Cross Thou bearest,
Thou call'st my soul to Thee.

For Grief shall outlast laughter,
And pain hold bliss in fee;
And what love follows after
To where all dead men be?
And who, and by what vision,
Shall shield from death's decision,
Or call from fields Elysian
His lost Eurydice?

Yea, who, when sad eyes fall on
Sad eyes that cannot see;
When fruitless voices call on
Closed ears, closed utterly;

When love is turned to sadness,
And memory to madness,
Shall give me back the gladness
Whereof Time spoileth me?

Not Pan whose pipes are broken
By that Ionian sea,
Where Thamos heard words spoken
Of gods in agony.

Nor Zeus, who long hath slumbered,
Nor Bacchus, vine-encumbered,
Nor nymphs, nor fauns unnumbered
Of laughing Arcady.

But Thou, all anguish proving
Thereby hast victory!

Thou conquer'st hate by loving,
Thro' bondage art made free;

Fate's master thro' complying
With Fate: Joy's lord thro' sighing;
Death's vanquisher by dying,
Lord, Thou persuadest me.

A CHILD IN HEAVEN

I NEVER dreamed that God could need
A child so small as this;
I quite forgot, until God spoke
That this, my child, was His.
I said, "My child shall dwell with me,
From Life's dawn to Life's even,"
And God replied, "The child is Mine,
And he shall dwell in Heaven."

Death never heard such tiny hands
Grope on his massy doors;
God never saw such tiny feet
Move up His golden floors.

Scarce from his mother was he weaned,
Scarce felt her soft embraces,
When he must walk alone, unscreened,
Thro' these wide heavenly places.

This room's length was his continent,
His treasured bliss—this toy!
What did he know, what could he do
In that ethereal joy?

Crowns for the saint, palms for the pure,
For these be fitting blisses;
But what for him, whose gain secure
Was just—his mother's kisses?

Here is the cradle where he lay,
White as his innocence,
No hand hath touched it since the day
God stooped and took him hence.

And here the empty breast whereon
He drank of joys and sorrows,
And dreamed his dreams—Alas, my son!—
Of unfulfilled tomorrows.

“Mother of God”—Some hope I find
In that remembered word;
Thou, on whose breast the sweet Child lay
Who brought thy heart the sword,
Did’st thou not see my little son,
Did’st thou not smile to meet him,
With kisses on thy mouth did’st run
To welcome him and greet him?

It must be so; for saints the palm,
But what for those who wait,
Mere mothers who with wistful eyes
Watch at the crystal gate?

O, too austere for childish gaze
The throne of the Eternal,
A lonely child up Heaven's wide ways
Comes seeking the maternal!

Yet let me think; was there no grief
God tasted in that hour
When from His breast the Son went forth
On whom Death should have power?
Down thro' the void alone He trod,
While stars sang loud evangels:
But round the secret place of God
There stood the weeping angels.

There stood the angels, veiled and dumb,
And Heaven laid down its mirth,
Remembering One, so far away,
The Son of God on earth!

Father of the Beloved Son

To earthly exile given,

Help me to say, "Thy will be done,"

I have a child in Heaven.

LONDON

I LOVE this London with a love half hate,
Fall'n Angel thou, all scarred with starry
fires !

Mistress and foe of souls disconsolate,
Centre and grave of all man's mad desires,
Heaven of the happy, and the sad man's Hell,
Imperial harlot, mirthful in thy woe,
Wise, tragic, foolish, imperturbable,
O wherefore, wherefore should I love thee
so ?

Yet so it is, so it must ever be !

No quiet hills can win me to their peace ;
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I hear thy tumult in the strenuous sea,
Thy wind-blown lights outshine the Plei-
ades!
Freed from my chain, for Bondage still I
yearn,
I fly from thee, detest thee, and return.

DEPARTURE

THERE's a silence on the meadows, there's a
kindness in the trees,

There's a smiling dew of tears upon the
grass,

And the flowers lean their petals and brush
against my knees,

And the myrtles stoop toward me as I pass.
For they know, ah, well they know
That today from them I go.

There's a beauty in the City that I never saw
before,

And the old gray spires are built of sapphire
flame,

And the dingy streets are changed, each one
a jasper floor,

Like the city John saw, Jerusalem its
name—

For it knows, ah, it doth know
That today from it I go.

And the faces of the men and women in the
street,

And the toilers and the ragged boys at play,
Are kindly-eyed and fair, are serious and
sweet,

Friendly-featured as I go away today;
For they know, ah, yes they know
That today from them I go.

I never thought to miss them, the old familiar
ways,

Happy-hearted I was minded to depart.

But now the softened music of those separated
days

Haunts my dreams at night, and fills my
heart.

For I know, ah, now I know
What it costs me thus to go.

EMMAUS

At night across the fens we walked,—
The large round moon hung low—
And I grew silent as you talked,
Until at last the brook's dull flow,
The Spring wind moving to and fro,
Spoke loudest as we walked.

I did not speak,—you wondered why—
For you that night were gay,
With jest and jibe that craved reply,
Your wit made scornful mock and play
Of creeds your life had cast away,
And I was silent—why?

I tell you now: against the moon
A Tree rose black and tall,
Whereon I saw, as clear as noon,
A Man, who did for pity call;
Could I approach with spear and gall
That Cross against the moon?

I tell you now: One walked with me,
Who put His hands in mine,
And touched me very tenderly:
Be He all human or divine,
Or how the God and man combine
I know not—but He walked with me.

I tell you now: One stooped to me,
And drew my lips to His;

He led me out to Galilee,
And bade my heart not faithless be,
And gave me the disciple's kiss,
You mocked Him—but He stooped to me.

At night across the fens we walked,
The large round moon hung low—
All silently to me He talked,
Until I heard the quiet flow
Of water He hushed long ago,
When on the waves He walked.

IN NO MAN'S LAND

*Behold me, brother, about to die!
Eton watched my mind expand,
Oxford saw my hopes flame high,
London broke my manhood's strength:
Slow I sank, till here at length
I found this innocent infamy
Of board and bed in No Man's Land.*

Judge, brother, if I fear to die!
I loved mankind, and none did hate;
But in me thrived no faculty
Of friendship; I have never known
A soul that truly touched my own;

Lo, this was my infirmity,
My torture also, and my fate.

Judge, brothers, if this world seem sweet!
By many roads I sought to rise;
Men thrust aside my halting feet,
Until at last my strength was spent,
And I, assured incompetent,
Was driven like dust about the street,
Beneath a city's scornful eyes.

Of all the things which I have done,
If one were perfect of its kind
Content were I to leave the sun:
But nothing has been perfectly
Wrought to the aim which tortured me;
In common grooves my life has run,
Nor ever answered to my mind.

Like one, who hears a haunting sound
Of music, magically wrought,
Which floats above him and around;
Who follows breathless, but in vain
O'er hill and moor—so I, with pain
Have toiled thro' life's enchanted ground.
Some seek and find: I only sought.

Some incommunicable heat
Of high desire alone was mine;
Some hidden stubborn pulse that beat
Somewhere within the heart or brain,
And stung me with its fruitless pain;
The heart to race—but lame the feet,
The will, but not the power to shine.

So, steadily down to No Man's Land
I sank; put angry shame aside,
Relinquished friendship's slack'ning hand,
And made an end of hope and trust,
Making no question things were just;
Sometimes, too, saw the Happy stand
Far-off, all rainbow-clad—and sighed!

But now all's over. On the stair
Down which there slides the last lean rat,
There waits a guest, benign and fair.
Come in, O Death! The roof is low,
But lower that to which we go,
And if the room be cold and bare,
Thou sure wilt not complain of that.

At least 'tis no unusual fate
To drink the bitter cup and die.

All generations, soon or late,
Tread the same much-frequented road;

Here Caesar stumbled with his load
Of fame; here, wild and passionate,

Pale Cleopatra, Antony!

Alike the anguish! He who first
Did taste of Death might cry to God
In terror, when upon him burst
The void and darkness infinite;

But now our eyes grow used to night;
Nor can we wholly count accurst
So known a fate, so thronged a road.

Fog-blurred, the dawn comes wearily,
I hear far-off the scolding wheel
Grind on the iron rails, I see
The dim host in the dissonant street
March out to toil with dragging feet;
Brothers, do ye not envy me,
That I no longer strive nor feel?

Poor fool of time advance, advance!
Long since hast thou been done with hope,
Long known thine insignificance;
One lesson more—that this vast whole
Ignores the individual soul;
Ask not for any further chance,
Nor wish a life of wider scope.

*Behold me, broken on Fortune's wheel!
Eton saw my mind expand,
Oxford did my soul unseal,
London, imperturbable,
Saw me burn in her lowest Hell.
Released at last from woe and weal
I sink in the dust of No man's Land!*

THE RIVER OF REST

To lie in meadow grasses,
Earth beneath my head,
With silken winds to cover me
Is a sufficient bed.

Blue darkness is my canopy,
Dim trees my watchers are,
And for a night-lamp at my couch
God lights a special star.

To hear a river talking
All the soft night through,
Makes all my griefs orchestral
And God seem near and true.

To hear beneath the grasses
The dead with quiet breath
Recount the roads they traversed,
Makes me in love with Death.

For kings in ivory houses
Beneath a golden dome
The grave seems very terrible,
To me—'tis coming home.

And when beneath these grasses
I lie secure from change,
If God should kiss me on the lips
I should not think it strange.

THE ENDING OF ALL DAYS

THIS is the doorway where we parted,

 This is the creaking garden gate;

The roses climbed here, sanguine-hearted,

 The thrushes sang here soon and late.

Here we stood on that last morning,

 Here in the sunlit garden ways,

And the roses never gave me warning

 It was the ending of all days.

Here, where the jasmine hides the lattice,

 She gave a last sweet look to keep;

That was her gracious way, and that is

 The white room where she fell asleep.

I spoke to her here of quick returning
When I had crowned myself with bays,
And never a voice cried thro' my yearning,
"This is the ending of all days."

If they had known,—the sanguine roses,
If I had known,—O fond blind eyes!
But who hears the rosebud when it closes?
Who in Tomorrow's truth is wise?
The roses would not speak to grieve her,
The birds sang happiest roundelay,
And I—thus lightly did I leave her,—
It was the ending of all days.

This is the doorway where we parted,
This is the creaking garden gate,
And a cold wind wanders broken-hearted
Over the flowers, and cries "Too late."

This is the path by which they bore her,

Here, where the single sunbeam strays;

Was it with roses strewn before her?—

Unto the ending of all days.

AT HER GRAVE

SIXTEEN at most was she
Flower-fair, slender ;
Never were hands so slight,
Never so tender.

I saw in sunset clouds
Robes to beseem her ;
She, with a clearer eye,
Saw her Redeemer.

One day she went from me ;
Then fell the Shadow,
Mournful the sun appeared,
Dreary the meadow.

Next day the sun came back,
Dearer and clearer;
Since then it seems to me
God has drawn nearer.

THE ITALIAN IN AMERICA

HE stood beside the curving track,
And watched the thundering cars rush by;
Then to his task he bent his back,
And thought a little, bitterly,
Of many things that he had not,
And the strange ventures of his lot.

“I’ve bread enough to spare,” he said,
“Why should my heart be so forlorn?”
Too well he knew. He bowed his head;
“O for the house where I was born,
The vineyards and the fields of maize,
The olive trees that knew my ways:

"The song of women thro' the vines,
The jests with which they greeted us,
The red moon netted in the pines,
The bells that rang the Angelus,
The low-breathed word, more sweet than
prayer,
Of her who waited for me there.

"O for the roads not built of steel,
The skies that on my youth looked down,
The far-off gold-crowned Campanile,
The crumbling, many-gated town,
The poplared pleasant Lombard plain
Which I shall never see again."

He stood beside the curving track
And said these tender things; but I

Saw Time's vast curtain lifted back,
And all the centuries rushing by;
Along the track the legions came
With brazen eagles wrought of flame.

For so they mourned—the sentinel
Upon the tower beside the Tweed,
Those armies imperturbable
That served great Caesar at his need;
And he, of Rome's imperial race,
Looked at me with tired Caesar's face.

He stood beside the road he made,
As they long since, whose flesh is grass,
And saw, along the rock-hewn grade
The Empire-bearing chariots pass;
And Caesar's ghost, when night fell dim
Approved his work, and smiled on him.

SPRING TOKENS

How slow the Spring climbs up the world
To tired eyes, half-despairing!

Sweet April walks with shrouded face,
And Winter's garb is wearing.

Fair violets, from some summer place,
They're selling in the city :
But still the north wind blows, and blows ;
It blows and has no pity.

The swallow long ago had come
If wishes could beguile it,
But still the swallow holds aloof,
He's wiser than the violet.

The cautious swallow loves us not,
He fears to venture near us,
The violet only loves enough
To die that it may cheer us.

The north winds blow, but thro' the world
A pulsing movement quivers,
As underneath dead ice one hears
The flow of living rivers.

And in the violet, gentle flower,
Strong summer's meek adorer,
The whole wide woodlands' scent is stored,
June's fragrance blown before her;—

As when before my lady comes,
For whom my love is waiting,

A subtle essence fills the air

Her presence intimating.

By these sure signs I know today

Tho' all is bleak and frozen,

The Spring is near; she sends for pledge

The violet—her first cousin.

THE WHISPERING WOOD

I FIND within the whispering wood
· No sign of fairy, pard, or elf;
A holier mystery moves the blood,
I hear God talking to Himself.

Like breath that flows and ebbs, like sighs
Of wordless deep intense delight,
I hear the sacred monodies
God utters to Himself at night.

“O happy, happy things that move,
O happy birds that fly or nest,
Contented with a little love
And thankful for a little rest!

“What I have made is very good,
Good every tiniest thing that walks!”
Even so amid the whispering wood
Within Himself God broods and talks.

THE PEOPLE'S CAUSE

O PEOPLE, will you never know your power,
Nor seize the earth, your just inheritance?
Lo, Babylon is fallen, dome and tower,
And broken Egypt's ancient dominance:
Tyre broodeth, widowed by her sailless sea,
O'er Nineveh the bittern spreads her wings;
Prone, in the halls of famous revelry,
Dust lies upon the faces of dead Kings,
The paths lie open for your sure advance,
Long since the trumpet hath proclaimed the
hour,
The hour foreseen, that ye shall wake from
sleep
Upon a morning when the world shall burn,

And with a noise, like waters of the deep,

Unto your Zion singing shall return.

O People, must the tale run on the same,

Thro' all the generations, soon and late,

The lamentations of a fruitless shame,

The broken armies bowed to meet their fate?

Is all in vain—the flaming barricade,

The Cross, the gallows, the red guillotine,

And all your marred redeemers, each one
made

A sacrifice for thy new sloth and sin?

When will ye come, no more disconsolate,

With banners terrible, and feet of flame,

Treading the wine-press of the grapes of
wrath,

In purple raiment, traveling in your might,

With Him Who long since trod the self-same
path,
And died in darkness that you might have
light?

O People, shall these lesser Kings of clay
Once more weld cruel chains about your
feet?

Shall lords of Mammon your great progress
stay,

Or counsel you with craft to vile retreat?
Great Rome, with all her legions, slew you
not,

Proud Paris kissed for peace your brows
blood-hued,

You were not crushed by Caesar's chariot;
With Jesus crucified, in life renewed

You lived again. And shall you fear to greet
The flaming pennon of your ultimate day,
Bought with a little gold to serve the lust
Of those who build an empire on your pain?
Once more the Spirit stirs the bones of dust,
O ye dry bones, let Him not call in vain.

A PRAYER

Now let me die! This one full exquisite hour
Hath drained the heart dry. From this mo-
ment's height

Life's path runs down thro' days of lessened
light,

Life's night commences, fades Hope's perfect
flower.

On Time's consummate Alp secure I stand,
As one high-throned who feels the quickened
flow

Of air where eagles wheel, and sees below
Great cities lie like glittering heaps of sand.

How painful to descend by narrowing ways

To narrower life, to turn reluctant eyes
Not all reluctant, from immense still skies,
Grow base, decline, and rot thro' evil days!
Ah God, of all my prayers but one I keep,
"Let my best action ring the bell for sleep!"

THE BUILDER

WITH weary hands we carve the stones
And mortise them with blood and tears,
We build our home of pride, we build
Our house secure for many years.
But that which lives within of care,
Of want or woe, we do not guess;
Alas, will no man tell us how
To build the House of Happiness?

On miry roads, with bruised sad feet;
Toward Golden Cities we aspire,
Cities of Gold, whose burnished towers
Beckon afar like tongues of fire.

Ah, vain the quest! Like flames that fade
Our golden cities flash and cease,
And who shall show us where is found
The City wherein dwelleth peace?

O foolish, foolish heart of man!
The little child with eager hand
Builds better palaces than thou
Of summer leaves or yellow sand.
For Laughter is his Architect,
And Joy his fair familiar,
And Visions are his visitors,
And God, and God's white evening star.

Oft have I prayed vain prayer and false;
Once more I pray—no more beguiled
By foolish pride or vain desire—
God, make me as a little child.

HEAVEN

IF one should find,
After long wandering in ways unkind
Thro' a great wood,
Weighed down with darkness and with soli-
tude,

A fresher wind,
A sudden gleam of waters and green sward,
A path should find,
A golden gap slashed by the sun's strong
sword,

And, opening up,
All the bright country, like a brimming cup

A-foam with bloom,

And sweet with Spring's dear promise and
perfume:

Would he not say,

"I have come unaware this happy day
On Paradise:

No longer will I wander on, unwise,

But here will rest,

Nor further go upon a bootless quest!"

So I expect,

Some day when all life's paths are most per-
plex't,

To come at even

Upon the pleasant quiet land of Heaven,

And thank the road

That with its many windings led to God.

THE CHILD ASLEEP

BE careful how you wake the child, for you

can never tell

Where the soul is traveling when the eyes

are shut:

There are a hundred kingdoms quite invisible,

Elfland and faeryland, Heaven and Lilliput,

And where the soul is traveling you can never

tell.

Be careful how you wake the child, for you

will never know

What Powers are waiting for the soul upon

Sleep's other side:

There are fairies and angels, like roses in a
row,

And knights on shining horses all ready for
a ride,

And which of them may call your child you
will never know.

Be careful how you wake the child, for if your
touch is rough

The shaken door of life may swing and drop
its silent latch:

For children love their sleep so they never
have enough,

And souls that wander in the dark are dif-
ficult to catch,

And they may wander quite away if your
touch is rough.

Be careful how you wake the child, for you
can never know

How delicate the life-thread that holds the
soul to earth:

In sleep-land there are angels, and all the flow-
ers that blow,

And such immortal meadows, and such de-
lightful mirth,

Your child may want to stay there—you can
never know!

NOBODY KNOWS

How the wind blows
Nobody knows.
Thro' the white Arctic spaces
And warm summer places,
It blows, and it blows;
But where the wind goes
Nobody knows.

How a love goes
Nobody knows.
There's a word that one misses,
An end to fond kisses,
And lovers are foes:

But where the love goes
Nobody knows.

Where the dead go
No one may know.

There's a grave mid the grasses
Where nobody passes,
And twilights are slow;

But where the dead go
No one may know.

THE LAUGHING MAID

I would not walk with sorrow

If I were you;

'Tis hard enough to borrow

Day's courage to be true;

Why stint your gracious laughter

For fear of what comes after,

When suns have scorched youth's dew?

I would not walk with sorrow

If I were you.

I would be blithe as birds are

If I were you,

I would be glad as words are

When hopeful love is new.

You are the Dawn's own daughter,

Why seek you Grief's wan water
That moans the long night through?
I would be blithe as birds are,
If I were you.

O not for tears and sadness
God fashioned you!
Your mouth He kissed for gladness,
Such joy in you He knew.
He gave your face the sweetness
Of flowers in their completeness,
Your lips the rose's hue.
He never meant that sadness
Should be for you.

The loads of life grow lighter
Because of you;
The rooms of life grow brighter

When you pass gaily through.
For some Life brings harsh duty;
Life asks of you but beauty
In all the things you do;
And Duty's yoke grows lighter
Because of you.

I would not talk with sorrow
If I were you.
New fragrance I would borrow
From mornings ever new.
To men God gives lamenting;
He gives, in sweet relenting,
His mirth unto a few.
His mirth, and not His sorrow,
He gave to you.

SHE PASSED AT DAWN

SHE passed at dawn; the summer breeze
Began the leaves to stir;
She passed like wind among the trees
And took the Dawn with her.

A gust of freshest fragrances
Did through the tree-tops beat;
It seemed the rustle of the dress
Round her departing feet.

A bird sang thrice, and yet again
In one long note sang he;
It was the very moment when
Her dear life ceased to be.

Such sweet composure marked her end,
So calm her words did fall,
It seemed she fancied Death a friend,
And dying natural.

She passed so easily, we three
Who knelt beside her bed
For many minutes earnestly
Prayed after she was dead.

She passed at Dawn, fit hour for one
Whose years had all been bright!
She passed ; she took with her the Sun
And left with us the Night.

THE WISE MAN'S WISH

A LITTLE work with time to play,
So let me live from day to day.

Not too much burdened lest I give
To work the strength I need to live,

Nor too much at my ease, lest I
Should lose my soul's integrity;

With mind serene, with spirit gay,
So let me live from day to day.

A little home, far from life's fray
Where I may greet each punctual day;

A room for books, a room for sleep,
A fire of logs when snows are deep;

Each window bright with the surprise
Of wide uninterrupted skies,
That glow and fade from rose to gray;
—There would I live from day to day.

A little wealth, but more I pray
Of Love that shall enrich each day;
Kind eyes that gleam to welcome me
With faith and cheerful constancy;
Then, when all earthly tasks are done,
An old age sitting in the sun;
A quiet grave when ends the way,
Where I may wait God's better day.

THE SONGS OF YOUTH

WHEN I have crossed the untumultuous sea,
And feel beneath my tired feet the shore,
The earliest greeting that will come to me,
Will not be from the friends I knew before;
No human hands with mine will mate,
Another welcome I anticipate,
When I have crossed the sea.

The songs I did not sing will meet me there,
The little flame-flowered and gentle things
That fled my heart perverse and left it bare;
The low-pitched songs the quiet poet sings,
Who asks not for applause, but sings apart,
Content with praises from one trustful heart,
These songs shall meet me there.

When I have crossed the untumultuous sea,
Before I seek for any human smile,
I shall desire, from pride freed utterly,
To go apart, and weep a little while,
While I recapture, tender strain by strain,
The songs of my lost youth and all their pain,
When I have crossed the sea.

EARTH-LOVE

THE books I love stand row on row,
They greet me, each with friendly face;
If I must leave them, I would know
What better friends shall take their place.

My pictures too; Madonna's eyes
That long have watched my toiling pen,

Great Turner's painted symphonies,
A Cuyp, with cattle on the fen—

A Corot, veiled in silver mist,
Pearl-dripping trees by waters wan;

And one of Venice, summer-kiss't,
By some unknown Italian.

What gain to me were streets of gold
That decorate an alien star?
Strange glories leave my spirit cold,
I cling to the familiar.

Though God should crush a thousand suns
To paint His crystal domes and seas,
More sweet old Corot's stream that runs
—Wan waters by pearl-dripping trees.

More sweet than that Jerusalem,
All new and fine, which John hath drawn,
Fair Venice, flashing like a gem
Upon the turquoise breast of dawn.

Let pallid saints flee from life's task,

And shut their hearts to earth-born mirth;

Death is no friend of mine. I ask

No better life than life on earth.

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